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By Way of Deception

"By Way of Deception" is a controversial book published in 1990, authored by Victor Ostrovsky and Claire Hoy. Ostrovsky, a former katsa (case officer) for the Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency, provides an insider's perspective on the operations and tactics of the organization. The title, which translates the former motto of the Mossad from Proverbs 24:6, suggests that deception is a fundamental strategy in the conduct of war and intelligence. The book begins with Ostrovsky's experiences in the Israeli Defense Forces and his subsequent recruitment and training within the Mossad. It delves into various operations

between 1971 and 1985, including the notable Operation Sphinx, which involved recruiting Iraqi nuclear scientists to gather intelligence on Iraq's nuclear capabilities. Ostrovsky's narrative also touches upon the Mossad's alleged involvement in the suicide bombing of the US Marine compound in Beirut, which resulted in numerous casualties. He claims that while the Mossad had prior knowledge of the attack, they only shared general information with the United States, omitting critical specifics. The book further alleges that the Mossad engaged in drug trafficking to fund operations outside of government oversight and accuses the agency of obstructing peace negotiations by assassinating a PLO diplomat. Ostrovsky's disillusionment with the

Mossad's methods and ethics culminates in his decision to retire, after being scapegoated for a failed operation. The publication of "By Way of Deception" was met with significant resistance from the Israeli government, which attempted to halt its release through a preliminary injunction in the United States, claiming it would endanger agents in the field. This legal action was unprecedented, marking the first time a sovereign state tried to prevent the publication of a book in the U.S. However, the injunction was quickly overturned by an appeals court, and the book went on to become a New York Times bestseller. The revelations in Ostrovsky's book have sparked debates on the balance between national security

and the public's right to know, the ethical boundaries of intelligence work, and the oversight of covert operations. Despite the controversy, "By Way of Deception" remains a significant work for those interested in the clandestine world of espionage and the moral quandaries it presents.